

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-05

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO CINCEUR IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 183216

LIMDIS MILITARY ADDEES HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

FOLLOWING REPEAT LONDON 12893 SENT ACTION SECSTATE, SECDEF
INFO CAIRO, BONN, JIDDA, PARIS, TEHRAN, ROME, MOGADISCIO, ADDIS
ABABA, KHARTOUM, ISLAMABAD, TEL AVIV, SANA, NAIROBI, ABU DHABI,
MOSCOW, ALEXANDRIA 04 AUG 77

QUOTE

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SO US ET MASS PDEV MPOS UK

SUBJECT: SOMALIA REQUEST FOR ARMS

REF: STATE 180916

1. IN RESPONSE TO REFTEL, POL-MIL ATTACHE DISCUSSED
WITH EWANS, HEAD EAST AFRICA DEPT/FCO, AND SALTHOUSE,
AUS FOR DEFENSE SALES/MOD, MATTER OF SOMALI INTEREST IN
EARLY SUPPLY OF ARMS. IN ACCORDANCE WITH REFTEL, WE
PASSED TO BRITISH SOMALI SHOPPING LIST AS STATED IN
PARA 2, STATE 161221.

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2. BRITISH INFORMED US THAT A SMALL SOMALI DELEGATION
HELD DISCUSSIONS WITH DEFENSE SALES ORGANIZATION ON
1 AUGUST. THEY PRESENTED BRITISH WITH IDENTICAL SHOP-
PING LIST AS NOTED IN STATE 161221. BRITISH HAD BEEN
LED TO BELIEVE BY SOMALIS THAT SOMALIA WAS INTERESTED
ONLY IN RIFLES AND RIFLE AMMUNITION. BRITISH WERE TAKEN

BY SURPRISE WITH SIZE AND BREADTH OF SOMALI REQUIREMENTS AND WERE UNABLE TO GIVE PRECISE PRICE AND DELIVERY DATE ON SHORT NOTICE. THEY DID UNDERTAKE, HOWEVER, TO PROVIDE SOME RIFLES AND RIFLE AMMUNITION ASAP. THE DEFENSE SALES ORGANIZATION NOTED IT WOULD TAKE AT LEAST A YEAR TO FULFILL AN ORDER FOR 90,000 RIFLES FROM BRITISH PRODUCTION.

3. THE SOMALI DELEGATION IS DUE BACK FOR DISCUSSIONS ON 8 AUGUST TO GET FURTHER DETAILS FROM BRITISH CONCERNING PRICE AND DELIVERY FOR OTHER ITEMS ON SOMALI SHOPPING LIST. THE BRITISH HAVE PROMISED SOMALIS THEY COULD DELIVER NON-MILITARY, NON-LETHAL EQUIPMENT SUCH AS SHEETS, BLANKETS, HELMETS, ETC., WITHIN ABOUT 3 TO 6 MONTHS. FCO HOPES TO HAVE BRITISH POSITION ON WHAT BRITAIN CAN SUPPLY FIRMED UP IN DAY OR TWO. THEY PROMISE INSTRUCTIONS WILL BE SENT TO UK EMBASSY WASHINGTON AS SOON AS MINISTERIAL CLEARANCE IN WHITEHALL HAS BEEN OBTAINED.

4. WE GET A DISTINCT IMPRESSION THAT SIZE OF SHOPPING LIST PRESENTED BY SOMALIS DISTURBED MINISTERS AND HAS FORCED SOME RETHINKING. HOWEVER, EWANS SAID THAT THE UK HAD NOT YET, AND PROBABLY WOULD NOT, DO "A GAP ANALYSIS" OF SOMALI DEFENSE NEEDS IN CONTEXT OF THEIR DEFENSE STRUCTURE. DEFENSE SALES ORGANIZATION HAS BEEN
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TASKED SIMPLY WITH IDENTIFYING WHAT UK EQUIPMENT MIGHT BE PROVIDED IN TERMS OF IMMEDIATE AND EARLY AVAILABILITY. IN THIS CONNECTION, WHITEHALL OFFICIALS EXPRESSED HOPE THAT US AND UK WOULD REACH AGREEMENT AS TO WHICH COUNTRY MIGHT MOST SUITABLY SUPPLY WHAT EQUIPMENT IN HOPE THAT SOMALI REQUIREMENTS COULD BE FILLED "WITHOUT ENGAGING IN ARMS SALES RACE." IN THIS CONTEXT BRITISH OBSERVED THAT FOR MANY ITEMS ON SOMALI LIST THERE IS NO UK EQUIVALENT AVAILABLE.

5. THE SOMALIS PUT THEIR SHOPPING LIST TO BRITISH IN CONTEXT OF AN ULTIMATUM RECEIVED FROM SOVIET UNION THAT SOMALIS MUST GET OUT OF OGADEN IMMEDIATELY "OR ELSE"--FCO ASSUMES THIS THREAT MEANS WITHDRAWAL OF SOVIET ASSISTANCE AND PERSONNEL. USING SOVIET ULTIMATUM AS LEVER, SOMALIS HAVE INSISTED THAT THEY REQUIRE MANY ITEMS ON SHOPPING LIST "WITHIN THREE WEEKS." EWANS NOTED THAT SOMALIS ARE "QUITE UPTIGHT" ABOUT PROSPECTIVE VISIT OF IRANIAN MILITARY MISSION AS BEING A DELAYING TACTIC SINCE SOMALIS WANT ARMS RIGHT AWAY. BELIEF HERE IS THAT SIAD IS WEIGHING PROS AND CONS OF WHETHER HE CAN SAFELY DEFY ULTIMATUM OR WHETHER HE MUST SUBMIT. ON

THIS BASIS, IT WAS EWANS' JUDGMENT THAT SOMALIS ARE

UNLIKELY TO BE ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT PROPOSALS TO SEND A
DEFENSE ASSESSMENT TEAM TO MOGADISCIO. FOR PRESENT,
BRITISH HAVE DECIDED NOT TO SEND A TEAM.

6. IF BRITISH DO SUPPLY SOMALIS WITH PART OF THEIR ARMS
REQUIREMENT, BRITISH EMPHASIZED IT WILL BE ON BASIS OF
A NORMAL COMMERCIAL TRANSACTION. THUS FAR SOMALIS HAVE
BEEN TALKING IN TERMS OF AID--A REQUEST LONDON CANNOT
AND WILL NOT ACCOMMODATE. SOMALIS HAVE NOT DISCLOSED TO
BRITISH HOW THEY WILL FIND MONEY TO PAY FOR ARMS, BUT
BRITISH GUESS IS IT WILL BE SAUDI OR IRANIAN.

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7. BRITISH APPRECIATED GETTING SOMALI SHOPPING LIST
FROM US--EVEN THOUGH THEY ALREADY HAD RECEIVED SOMETHING
SIMILAR FROM THE SOMALI DELEGATION. WHITEHALL WOULD BE
MUCH MORE DELIGHTED, WE BELIEVE, IF WE COULD INFORM THEM
OF ITEMS WHICH WE WOULD NOT BE UNHAPPY TO SEE BRITAIN
SUPPLYING. HERE, OFFICIALS EMPHASIZED UK INTEREST IN
SMALL ARMS AND SMALL ARMS AMMUNITION AND COMMUNICATIONS
EQUIPMENT. BRITISH OFFICIALS STRESSED THEY WANT TO STAY
AWAY FROM SELLING ANYTHING WHICH WOULD INVOLVE HAVING TO
PROVIDE TRAINING TO SOMALIS EITHER HERE OR IN-COUNTRY.

8. REGRET STATE 183033 ARRIVED AFTER OUR DISCUSSIONS
WITH FCO AND MOD OFFICIALS.

BREWSTER

UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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NNN

Message Attributes

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